

## WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2006

IGCS Conference Room #1, Indianapolis, IN

<b>Voting Members Present:</b> Allen County – Paul McAfee Carroll County – George Mears Cass County – Mercedes Brugh DNR – Kyle Hupfer & Steve Morris Fountain County – Connie Scheurich Huntington County – Mike Mettler Knox County – Shane Cooper Miami County – Ken Einselen Parke County – Steve Luther Posey County – Marianna Weinzapfel Sullivan County – John Gettinger Tippecanoe County – Norman (Lucky) Neiburger Vigo County – Keith Ruble (alternate) Wabash County – Ernest Passwater Warren County – Louise Jewell	<b>Voting Members Absent w/o Proxy:</b> Gibson County Jay County Vermillion County  <b>Proxies</b> Posey County - Ralph Weinzapfel to Marianna Weinzapfel Wells County - Keith Huffman to Mike Mettler  <b>Non-Voting Members Present:</b> Martha Clark Mettler – IDEM Brian Blackford – Indiana Tourism  <b>Non-Voting Members Not Present</b> INDOT DNR-DHPA
<b>Commission and DNR Staff Present:</b> Ron James – WRHCC Executive Director Karen Hanes – DNR Outdoor Recreation	<b>Guests:</b> Stan Lambert – Wabash River Development Corporation Rory Robinson – National Park Service RTCA

### CALL TO ORDER

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. John welcomed all the new and current commission members. Ron James also welcomed the new members and gave a presentation about the history, function and accomplishments of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC). Steve Morris reported he had 2 proxies: Keith Huffman from Wells County to Mike Mettler and Ralph Weinzapfel to Marianna Weinzapfel.

Kyle Hupfer, Director of the Department of Natural Resources addressed the commission. Mr. Hupfer pointed out that of the 37 or 38 commissions he oversees, the WRHCC is a commission that really does something and it is appreciated by the DNR. He urged the commission to continue their good work. Of the many success stories, Mr. Hupfer felt the Wabash River Water Trail is going to be great. Mr. Hupfer also stated that the governor has tasked DNR with leading an effort to come up with a statewide trails plan and the Wabash River Water Trail will be included in the plan. The Wabash River is very important, has been highlighted, and will continue to be highlighted, in DNR publications. Mr. Hupfer urged the commission to continue to set measurable objectives and do the most they can, with the resources they have; to make the Wabash an attractive, successful, tourist draw. Mr. Hupfer offered his services and let the commission know its members can reach him at [khupfer@dnr.in.gov](mailto:khupfer@dnr.in.gov) or through Steve M.

Mr. Hupfer took a few minutes to answer questions from the commission. John G. asked about a public access point at Fairbanks Landing. Mr. Hupfer stated it may already be on the Fish & Wildlife plan to allow for expansion of opportunities. Ron J. asked about the Commission and Corridor Funds in 2007. Mr. Hupfer indicated it was too early to tell. He did mention that the

WRHCC is a very diverse group, encompassing many counties, and there was nothing to stop an out growth of this commission to some sort of a 501(c)3 that could be formed to raise money. John G. asked about the possibility of the governor participating in a water trail grand opening. Mr. Hupfer stated the governor's schedule is usually full, but he would see what he could do.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING MINUTES**

John G. asked for approval of the January 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Steve M. noted that a received proxy was not noted in the minutes. Mercedes Brugh made a motion to approve the minutes with the Weinzapfel proxy added. Steve Luther 2<sup>nd</sup>. The minutes as amended were approved.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

John G. reported the DNR's new Fairbanks Landing has a lot of river frontage. The organization of Paddlefest '06 (Posey County) is moving forward; there is hope attendance will double to 600 this year. At Merom, plans for the Water Trail grand opening include stretching a ribbon across the river and having a cutting ceremony. John attended the Indiana Conservation Alliance lobby day, meeting with some legislators and passed out legislative informational packets.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ron J. reported ongoing work with the Watershed Leadership Academy, including a "face-to-face" 2 day conference with approximately 30 water leaders from across the state. IWLA leaders seem interested in pursuing a state-oriented "River Rally." Ron attended the documentary highlights event at the State Museum; as did several WRHCC members, state legislators and county commissioners. PBS broadcast occurred soon after; the documentary was well received. Ron also reported that the Dale and Faulkner painting exhibition opens March 25 and runs for 90 days at the ISM in Indianapolis; it will then travel to sites along the corridor and around the state. The paintings will be auctioned in August, 2007 and a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the WRHCC, which, the members were reminded, makes it worth our while to promote the exhibition and the auction within the Wabash communities. One of the artists, David Dale, designed the River Trail signs. Finally, Ron reported Water Trail posting progress in Fountain and Warren Counties with Louise Jewell's posting of signs at Independence, Williamsport and Attica access points. He encouraged the commission members to get their kiosk agreements signed, tally and report their sign needs. Ron will arrange delivery. Ideally, each county should be fully posted before that county's Water Trail opening event.

## **FINANCE REPORT (see attached)**

Steve M. distributed a financial report to the commission members and gave a summary of the budget. Steve also reported that the State has converted their purchasing system to PeopleSoft, which has resulted in processing delays. Steve indicated that there were some expenditures that had not been processed yet and some expenses coming up that are not indicated on the summary sheet. Steve also reported that the commission travel from last month was not submitted because he had not yet received official appointment notification for several members.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Legislative Study Committee**

Mercedes B. reported she sent the legislative packets to Ron J. Ron stated that Dale Brier of DNR – Outdoor Recreation was very helpful in preparing maps for the packets. Our printer has stopped working and the packets have not been printed. The packets will enable our members to visit their legislators to introduce them to the WRHCC and all the commission has achieved.

## **Water Trail**

Mike M. reported on problems getting the maps bid. Steve M. will assign Dale B. to aid with the maps, including involving the water trail committee in getting the map project ready to bid again. PEN Products may be able to get the job completed for the commission. Dale's list of bridges over the Wabash was given to Ron. Ron J. stated 20 to 30 bigger signs costing around \$6000 may be needed for the bigger bridges that cross the Wabash. Ron also requested funds to promote Water Trail opening events. Norman (Lucky) Neiburger made a motion to allow a maximum of \$300 for promotion of water trail opening events, with invoices submitted for payment to Steve M. no later than March 31, 2006. Marianna Weinzapfel 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

## **River Road/Heritage Community Signs**

No report

## **“The Wabash: Life on the ‘Bright White’ River” Video**

John G. stated the feedback has been very positive. Ron J. passed out 11 DVDs (all he had). Those who attended the January highlight event will receive a copy in the mail. Louise J. made a motion to obtain additional DVDs, by purchase if necessary, from WFYI. Steve Luther 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lucky N. questioned the cost and moved to amend the motion to cap costs at \$1.00 each. Steve Luther 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried but was then repealed. Louise J. moved to obtain and send a DVD to all of the state legislators, with a cost cap of \$3.00 each. Mercedes B. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

## **Education**

Though the committee got a negative result from a Lafayette meeting for Discover the River, The Banks of the Wabash has voted to grant \$300 towards a Teach the River symposium. A committee has been established in Vermillion County, where the event will most likely be held.

## **River Rally Indiana**

Lucky N. reported progress with a formation committee meeting would be held on April 3, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the education center at Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Grant Request for Park Service Study of Heritage Corridor**

Rory Robinson of the National Park Service reported on a January meeting in Fort Wayne where a National Heritage Area study for the Maumee and Wabash corridors was discussed. This would involve Congress funding (\$250 – 300 K) the National Park Service to conduct a suitability and feasibility analysis, including determining public support. Congressman Souder is the most apparently interested member to present a bill, though Congressman Souder's staff indicated that he questions substantial interest beyond his congressional district.

Lucky N. made a motion for Ron J. to prepare a letter to Congressman Souder and other Indiana congressional delegates to consider any study to include the Wabash River corridor. Marianna W. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Steve M. suggested it might be best for each county's commissioners to hear about the possible study from their appointed corridor representative. Steve recalled there were a number of counties in the corridor resolving to pull out of the WRHCC if American Heritage River designation was pursued. These resolutions may still be in place. Mercedes B. stated more time is needed to educate the counties as to the differences between these programs. Lucky N. moved that the WRHCC write a letter to Congressman Souder, and the other Indiana Congressional delegates, to express interest in including the Wabash corridor in this study, yet requesting more facts about the time frame and confirming Heritage Areas do not involve the taking of private land. A DVD copy of the documentary could be included. George Mears 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

### **Conservation Day Report**

John G. reported the Conservation Day at the Statehouse went very well for the WRHCC.

### **Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy**

Ron J. reported the class work is substantial and will require more time than previously allotted.

### **River Rally (River Network), May 5-9, 2006 in New Hampshire**

Mike M. reported he has completed the paperwork to get approval to attend. Steve M. noted the trip would exceed the allotted \$1,200 budget. The paperwork will be submitted for approval.

### **IN Government Efficiency Commission**

No response has been received from our submission.

### **Interpretive Brochure**

Steve M. stated this work is complete, pending only normal requests and shipping.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **De-Trash the Wabash calendar status**

De-Trash Tippecanoe will take place May 20 in conjunction with Lafayette Clean Sweep and, possibly, West Lafayette's clean-up day. De-Trash the Wabash Tippecanoe has been so successful, the cities are joining to gain synergy for their efforts. John G. reported on a recent De-Trash at Fairbanks Landing. Ron J. stated that clean up support is available from Banks of the Wabash, including the use of gloves, safety vests, De-trash the Wabash banner, etc.

#### **Banks of the Wabash, Inc., brochure & membership drive**

John G. stated each should organize a chapter of this group for the river in their county. With 25 members, the chapter would have a position on the board of directors. In Sullivan County, a core group has been identified and, at the next meeting, officers will soon be selected. The goal is to have members all up and down the river and an active group in every county. Steve M. suggested that every commission member join Banks of the Wabash. The cost is \$15.

#### **Select county representatives to write articles for next *Reflections***

Louis Jewell, Mercedes B., Shane Cooper will submit articles, due 4/20, for the next Reflections.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Keith Ruble complimented Ron J.'s presentation of the Wabash for Kyle Hupfer.

Ron informed the board that each cartridge or head replacement for the WRHCC printer has been unsuccessful as, each time, a different part is then needed. Louise J. moved to replace the unreliable unit with a new printer for less than \$400. Mercedes B. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

John G. suggested the executive committee should hold a meeting regarding the budget. Marianna W. suggested any remaining funds be used to support events along the Wabash.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m. Next meeting: May 10, 2006 in Tippecanoe County. Lucky N. will arrange the place.